The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

National School Code of Conduct

Revised May 25, 2018

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INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education's National School Code of Conduct provides guidance to all school personnel towards ensuring that the school is a safe and secure learning environment where all children can learn and develop holistically. The school should also be a place that promotes the principles of courtesy, integrity, respect and responsibility and support inclusive education through equity, justice and fairness. The National School Code of Conduct supports these principles and outlines the responsibilities of school personnel, standards of behaviour and range of consequences for violations.

The National School Code of Conduct therefore sets the context and provides the structure for the development and implementation of school-level discipline policies (discipline plan/discipline matrix) with reference to regulations under the Education Act, national policies, circular memoranda and guidelines as issued by the Ministry of Education.

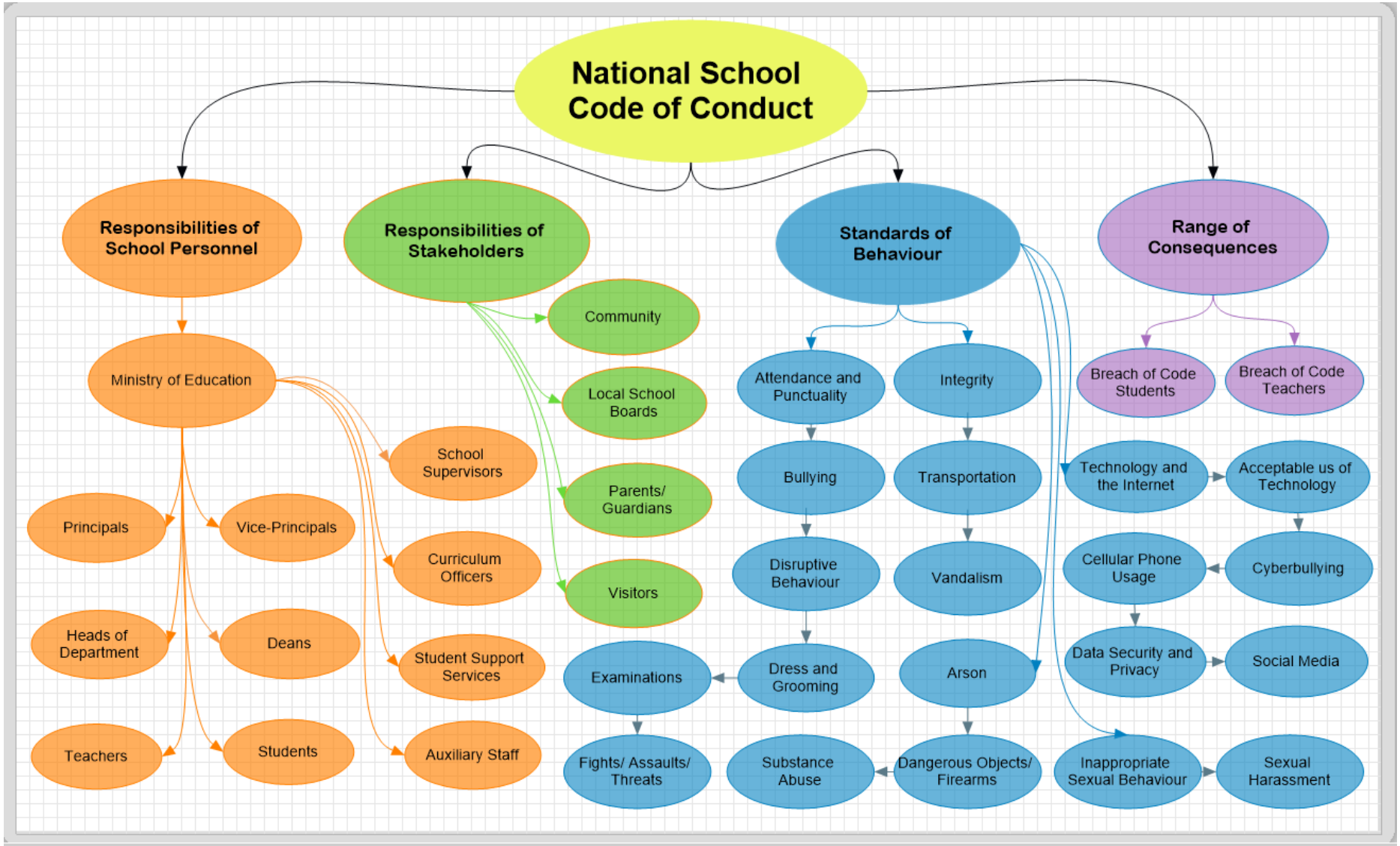
The revision of the Code of Conduct was triggered by three salient realities, namely: (i) the enactment of new legislation that impacts the school and children in general, (ii) the pervasiveness of the Internet and social media with their concomitant influence on cyber-related infractions and (iii) the need to update responsibilities and standards in light of new approaches to the maintenance of discipline in schools under the ambit of School-Based Management.

The document therefore addresses issues such as the responsible use of technology, cyberbullying, data security and privacy and social media. All references to relevant laws were updated and the consequences for infraction have been amended to include new approaches, inclusive of student and parent conferences and initiatives aimed at deterring recidivism.

The contents of the document were reordered to allow for seamless alignment of related areas and to facilitate ease of reference. This is reflected in the new framework included in the document, both graphically as well as with colour-coded reference indicators.

Principals, in collaboration with staff, parents and students and other stakeholders in the school community are expected to implement the National School Code of Conduct in a manner that is sensitive to diversity and the culture of schools.

National School Code of Conduct Framework



PRINCIPLES

Respect

It is expected that school personnel will exhibit behaviours that show respect for the rights, property and safety of themselves and others.

Responsibility

It is expected that school personnel will accept personal responsibility for their behaviour in order to maintain a safe and productive learning environment.

Rights

It is expected that school personnel will honour the rights of others by demonstrating appropriate behaviours.

Integrity

It is expected that school personnel will operate with honesty and fairness and adhere to sound moral and ethical principles.

Courtesy

It is expected that school personnel will be polite and treat each other, stakeholders, as well as members of the general public, in a manner that maintains each other's dignity.

Productivity and Performance

It is expected that all school personnel will subscribe to excellence in all aspects of work acknowledging each other's contributions.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In recognition of the global commitment to provide access, equity and quality in education, and in support of its efforts to reform, expand and modernise the education system, the Ministry of Education shall support the delivery of inclusive education in all schools by providing assistance and services to all students. It shall also take appropriate steps to ensure that education is available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to all learners.

This includes:

- Children with a diverse range of learning difficulties and/or challenges
- Children identified as gifted learners
- Children living with HIV/AIDS
- Children from remote and impoverished populations
- Children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities
- Children from other disadvantaged or marginalized geographic areas or groups
- Children with language barriers
- Children who are victims of crime

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education is responsible for:

1. Providing a safe, secure and healthy learning environment for all school personnel.
2. Providing quality governance to support the maintenance of good discipline and conduct.

PRINCIPALS

According to Section 27 of the Education Act, Chap 39:01, principals shall be responsible for the day-to-day management of their schools which include the supervision of all students and ensuring the physical safety and discipline of pupils.

The Principal is responsible for:

1. Creating and maintaining a safe and peaceful environment for students that is conducive to teaching and learning.
2. Establishing school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations in alignment with national policy and guidelines from the Ministry of Education.
3. Communicating the school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations to parents, staff, students and all other relevant stakeholders.
4. Formulating and ensuring consistency in implementing school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
5. Discussing with parents, with support from the teacher and relevant support staff, student behaviour and developmental concerns.
6. Assisting teachers and parents by engaging relevant internal and external stakeholders to resolve student behaviour problems.
7. Reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the Children Act 46:01, the Children's Authority Act Chap 46:10 and the Sexual Offences Act Chap 11:28.
8. Engaging various stakeholders in the development and implementation of preventative programmes to manage school discipline in accordance with policy guidelines.
9. Collaborating with Student Support Services Division and other relevant stakeholders to provide assistance for students with emotional, psycho-social and behavioural difficulties.
10. Collaborating with external agencies including Community Police and Ministries of Government.

11. Ensuring the School-Based Intervention Team is established and fully functional in the school.
12. Providing pedagogical direction and support to students on suspension for five (5) or more days.
13. Reporting all accidents that cause injury which occur at schools to the Ministry and to the Chief Inspector of the Occupational Safety and Health Agency in accordance with Section 46 and 46A of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Chap 88:08.
14. Ensuring that personnel who propose to provide services to the school are properly vetted for integrity and soundness of character.
15. Furnishing the MoE with all pertinent information and all returns.
16. Keeping proper records.

VICE PRINCIPALS

The Vice-Principal is responsible for:

1. Assisting the principal in the planning and adminstration of the programme of teaching and curriculum related activities.
2. Arranging and /or conducting seminars and workshops to facilitate the all round development of students.
3. Discussing students' academic and behavioural patterns with teachers, parents/guardians and personnel from Student Support Services Division.
4. Disciplining and counselling students.
5. Resolving problems between students and teachers and among teachers.
6. Ensuring adequate level of supervision and instruction for students.
7. Communicating the school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations to parents, staff, students and all other relevant stakeholders.
8. Reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the Children Act 46:01, the Children's Authority Act Chap 46:10 and the Sexual Offences Act Chap 11:28.

HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

Heads of Department are responsible for:

1. Engaging teachers in clinical supervision as a developmental tool to improve the teaching and learning process, inclusive of classroom management.
2. Developing strategies to improve academic standards of performance (targets) in alignment with the school's benchmarks.
3. Ensuring the effective administration of internal and external examinations under the supervision of the vice-principal.
4. Monitoring students' academic performance and developing a plan of action for improvement.
5. Ensuring that curriculum implementation is in keeping with national guidelines and requirements.

DEANS

Deans are responsible for:

1. Assisting in the development and implementation of the School Discipline Plan.
2. Monitoring academic and discipline performance of a group of students.
3. Preparing and delivering instruction and guidance to students whose progress falls below the required standard.
4. Monitoring students' use of school transport services.
5. Engaging Student Support Services after consultation with the principal.

TEACHERS

A teacher's conduct shall at all times be such as would not bring the Teaching Service into disrepute.

The teacher is responsible for:

1. Being regular in attendance, punctual and prepared to perform his/her teaching duties.
2. Treating each student with dignity and respect.
3. Creating a healthy, nurturing and safe environment for students in his/her charge.
4. Consistently fostering and modelling school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
5. Reviewing with students the school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.

6. Establishing and maintaining a culture of appropriate behaviour conducive to effective learning in the classroom.
7. Recognising and rewarding appropriate behaviour and performance of students and providing feedback to all students and parents.
8. Reporting promptly to appropriate school authorities continuing student misbehaviour and reporting immediately any misbehaviour that will or may result in suspension or expulsion.
9. Reporting promptly any suspected child abuse or situation of neglect in accordance with the Children Act Chap 46:01 the Children's Authority Act Chap 46:10 and the Sexual Offences Act Chap 11:28.
10. Adhering to the dress code as outlined in this document.

STUDENTS

The student is responsible for:

1. Behaving in a manner that does not interfere with the rights of others.
2. Abiding by expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations established by the school in alignment with the National School Code of Conduct.
3. Attending school daily including during examinations. Students must be punctual and prepared for all classes.
4. Adhering to the principles of respect, responsibility, integrity, courtesy, productivity and performance.
5. Completing all school assignments and homework.

SCHOOL SUPERVISORS

The School Supervisor is responsible for:

1. Treating all school personnel with dignity, respect and professional courtesy.
2. Communicating to the School Based Management Team (SBMT), the National School Code of Conduct and all policies related to school discipline.
3. Monitoring and evaluating the effective implementation of expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations of the Ministry of Education as well as schools.
4. Ensuring prompt action and timely responses to issues brought to them.
5. Making recommendations on matters relating to the school.
6. Coordinating support for school-related initiatives as outlined in the School Development Plan.

7. Ensuring the operation of all schools in keeping with established regulations and Circular Memoranda of the Ministry.

CURRICULUM OFFICERS

The Curriculum Officer is responsible for:

1. Treating all school personnel with dignity, respect and professional courtesy.
2. Providing support and training to teachers for effective delivery of the curriculum.
3. Liaising with principals, vice-principals and heads of department on various aspects of curriculum delivery.
4. Assisting with monitoring and evaluating curriculum implementation.
5. Providing advice and support to schools on subject syllabi, school-based assessment and other forms of assessment.
6. Assisting in managing issues related to curriculum implementation in collaboration with principals and school supervisors.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES STAFF

Student Support Services staff is responsible for:

1. Treating all children and school personnel with dignity, respect and professional courtesy.
2. Cooperating with school authorities in the enforcement of school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
3. Assisting teachers and parents in resolving student behavioural problems.
4. Reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the Children Act 46:01, the Children's Authority Act Chap 46:10 and the Sexual Offences Act 11:28.
5. Providing support for students through prevention and intervention strategies inclusive of Classroom Guidance, Counselling, Consultation, Assessment and Referral.

AUXILIARY STAFF

Auxiliary staff includes security, maintenance, health and safety school officers, clerical staff and other non-teaching staff/personnel. The auxiliary staff is responsible for:

1. Treating all children and school personnel with dignity, respect and professional courtesy.
2. Cooperating with school authorities in the enforcement of school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
3. Informing school officials of concerns relative to student behaviour.
4. Being regular in attendance, punctual and prepared to perform his/her duties.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

COMMUNITY

The community is responsible for:

1. Maintaining a standard of conduct for adults, youth, and children that will foster appropriate behaviour.
2. Cooperating with the Ministry of Education and the school personnel in the enforcement of school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
3. Providing educational and recreational opportunities to allow for the development of appropriate student behaviour.
4. Providing support for school initiatives that will lead to the attainment of desired student outcomes.

LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

The Local School Board is responsible for:

1. Treating all school personnel with dignity, respect and profesional courtesy.
2. Supporting the school leadership in communicating the National School Code of Conduct to all stakeholders and personnel.
3. Assisting school leadership and Ministry of Education in monitoring and evaluating the effective implementation of school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
4. Receiving information, complaints and expressions of concern from the public concerning the school and its members, making recommendations and relating them to competent authority.
5. Encouraging, promoting, sustaining and fostering mutual understanding, fellowship and cooperation among all persons associated with the school.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The parent/guardian is responsible for:

1. Making sure the student attends school daily and on time, properly attired in full uniform and equipped for effective learning to take place.
2. Reading and reviewing school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
3. Cooperating with school officials regarding matters of discipline.
4. Seeking help from school and community agencies in correcting student misbehaviours.
5. Informing school officials of concerns relative to student behaviour and medical conditions that may affect the child's well-being or performance.
6. Promoting and improving children's health and well-being.
7. Supervising and ensuring the completion of homework and other assignments and for providing an appropriate environment for learning at home.
8. Mandatory reporting of any suspected/alleged child abuse or situations of neglect in accordance with the Children Act Chap 46:01, the Sexual Offences Act Chap 11:28 and the Children's Authority Act Chap 46:10.
9. Providing all reasonable data requested by the school or Ministry of Education (MoE) as may be required to improve service delivery.
10. Routinely updating contact, medical, social and other relevant information of your child or ward.
11. Supporting policies of the Ministry of Education.
12. Visiting the school promptly when requested to discuss student academic performance, behaviour and medical matters.
13. Desisting from violent, abusive or inappropriate interaction with any child or adult on the school's compound.
14. Maintaining cordial and civil relationships with other parents of the school.
15. Providing written explanations for all absences and, for three or more days, a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner where applicable.
16. Attending all appointments set with the school and or other agencies to which the child was referred for further assessment.

VISITORS TO SCHOOLS

Parents/guardians and other patrons of the community are welcome and encouraged to visit the school.

1. All visitors are expected to report to security officers before proceeding to the principal's office.
2. Visitors to the schools must respect the learning environment and maintain proper behaviour and decorum. All visitors are expected to be appropriately attired.
3. Disruption of the orderly process of the school is prohibited.
4. The principal or his/her designee is authorised to deny access, ban or bar future access, remove or request the removal of any visitor whose behaviour is disruptive to the educational/working environment of the school. Visitors must adhere to all security protocols.
5. Any visitor to the school who has been denied access or who has been asked to leave may appeal to the School Supervisor of the district. Final appeals may be heard by the Director of School Supervision and Management.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality and regular attendance at schools are fundamental values of the Ministry of Education which impact directly on teaching, learning and student success. Therefore, it is the policy of the Ministry of Education that all school personnel must be punctual in attending school, classes and all school related activities and must be regular in attendance.

ATTENDANCE

Students and all school staff are required to attend all assigned classes every day. For students irregular attendance is defined as more than one day or two half days per week in any four week period in which school is in session. For teachers, the Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000 states that an act of misconduct is committed "if a teacher is absent from office or official duties without leave or valid excuse or is habitually irregular in the time of arrival or departure from the place of employment."

PUNCTUALITY

Students and all school staff are required to be punctual to school and all school-related activities. They are required to report for duty at the assigned times as indicated by the appropriate regulations.

Recommended consequences - one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent/ guardian contact
- Conference with parent/ guardian
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Student behaviour contract
- Removal of privileges
- In-school intervention programme

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

- Referral to the EAP
- Other consequences (see Appendix V)

References:

1. *Education Act, Chap 39:01*
2. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000*
3. *Public Service Commission Regulations, Chap1:01*

BULLYING

Bullying is defined as the use of force, coercion, or threat in order to abuse or intimidate others. Bullying can be effected through physical force, written, verbal or non-verbal expression, electronic means, and vandalism or willful damage to the personal property of others. There are many different types of bullying which include; cyber, physical, social and verbal.

A person's conduct is considered bullying if it is:

a. Intended to cause physical, emotional or psychological harm to another
b. Repeated and consistent enough to create an intimidating, abusive or disruptive school environment
c. Unequal coercive power between the perpetrator (bully) and the victim who is unable to defend himself/herself.

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can be overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies, including hardware such as computers and smartphones, and software such as social media, instant messaging, texts, websites and other online platforms.[1]

Physical bullying

Physical bullying involves the use of physical force which includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property. It can cause both short term and long term damage.

Social bullying

Social bullying sometimes referred to as covert bullying is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Social bullying includes:

- lying and spreading rumours
- negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking unkindly
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's reputation or social acceptance.

[1]See section on Cyberbullying on pg. 48

Verbal bullying

Verbal bullying incorporates the use of words to carry out an act of bullying. Verbal bullying includes name-calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse. The verbal assault might focus on an individual's appearance, lifestyle choices, intellect, skin color and ethnicity.

The Ministry of Education prohibits all forms of bullying. This prohibition applies to all school personnel. It pertains to activities within the school and extends to external school-related activities as well as commuting or walking to and from school. Incidents of bullying must be addressed promptly and effectively by schools while upholding CONFIDENTIALITY in the process. Retaliation against anyone who reports a bullying incident is a serious offence and will incur similar consequences as that of a bullying incident.

The Ministry of Education promotes:

1. Prosocial/acceptable standards of behaviour to be displayed and enjoyed by both adults and students in schools
2. Equality of treatment for all students
3. Freedom to learn in peace and safety
4. A climate of peace, respect and dignity in all schools
5. Development of operational policies on bullying with the input of all school personnel and the guidance of trained professionals where necessary. The Policy should reflect the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Parent/guardian contact
- Conference with parent/ guardian
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Extended Suspension
- Referral to Learning Enhancement Centre
- Referral to law enforcement agencies
- Expulsion

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

References:

1. *Education Act Chap 39:01*
2. *Convention on The Rights of the Child, 1989*
3. *Children Act Chap 46:01*
4. *Summary Offences Act Chap 11:02*

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

School personnel are entitled to a learning environment free of unnecessary disruption. Any physical, written or verbal disturbance, communication or activity, within the school setting or during related activities which may interrupt or interfere with teaching and orderly conduct of school activities, is prohibited.

1. Any event, action or statement which relies on chance for the monetary advantage of one or more participants at the expense of others is gambling. This violation includes exchanging items of value as well as currency and extends to keeping score for later settlement.

2. The possession or distribution of print or electronic materials which are obscene, violent, inappropriate or significantly disruptive to the educational process is prohibited and are liable to conviction under Part VIII of Children Act of 2012. Included are inappropriate student expression, threats, hit lists, distribution of non-authorized literature and illegal assembly.

3. The use of obscene, vulgar, insulting or abusive language, threats or remarks intended to demean any person in the school community is prohibited. This violation includes, but is not limited to actions, displays or written material of an obscene, violent or inappropriate nature and the wearing of adornments, including inappropriate jewellery, which themselves convey either violent or sexually suggestive messages or offensive statements.

4. Failure to respond appropriately to written or verbal directions given by school personnel, or law enforcement officers is considered insubordination. Also included is disobedience or defiance of reasonable requests made by school personnel.

5. Other activities which disrupt the orderly functions of the school include, but are not limited to: demonstrating hostile or disruptive behaviour, habitual offences (repeat violations of the National School Code of Conduct), unauthorised sales by students, possession of inappropriate toys, inappropriate use of school lockers and facilities, and setting off false fire alarms.

6. Gang-related activity will not be tolerated. Symbols of gang membership are expressly prohibited (i.e. clothing that symbolises association, rituals associated with, or activities by an identified group).

7. Inappropriate teacher/student or auxiliary staff/student relationships will not be tolerated.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for student)

- Student conference
- Parent/guardian contact
- Conference with parent/gaurdian
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Detention
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Referral to law enforcement agencies
- Confiscation
- School community service
- Removal of privileges

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

- Referral to EAP
- Other consequences (see Appendix V)

References:

1. *Education Act, Chap 39:01*
2. *Circular Memorandum #4 – student discipline in and out of school (January 14, 1997)*
3. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000.*
4. *Refer to Anti-Gang legislation*
5. *Children Act Chap 46:01*
6. *Children Authority Act Chap 46:10*
7. *Sexual Offences Act Chap 11:28*

DRESS AND GROOMING

It is the position of the Ministry of Education that all school personnel should be appropriately attired and groomed; students should wear school uniforms and their grooming should be modest, clean and consistent with healthy, sanitary and safety practices. School personnel (including administrative staff, teachers, assistants, etc.) are required to project a professional image, command respect and consider safety in the wokplace.

STUDENTS

Presenting a bodily appearance or wearing clothing which is disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive, obscene or which endangers the health or safety of the students or others is prohibited. Failure to wear the prescribed school uniform and to be appropriately groomed as set out by the individual school rules is a violation of the National School Code of Conduct and will warrant the appropriate consequence.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent/guardian contact
- Conference with parent/guardian
- Detention
- Removal of privileges
- School community service
- In-school intervention programme

TEACHERS

Teachers shall dress in a manner consistent with the dignity and honour of the teaching profession. They should always bear in mind that they are role models for their students and engender respect through their comportment.

In general:

i. Persons should always be clean and well-groomed.

ii. Clothing and footwear should be neat, clean and in good repair and appropriate for the particular body type; footwear should be consistent with clothing and overall appearance.

iii. Makeup, jewellery and all clothing should be appropriate for the school and not serve to distract from the learning environment; attention should be taken to avoid:

- Excessive /inappropriate display of body form

- Revealing necklines and dress/skirt slits
- Inappropriate lengths of skirts/dresses/trousers
- Excessive use of perfume or cologne
- Exposed undergarments or see-through tops.

iv. Principals must continue to offer these guidelines to teachers.

While the Ministry of Education offers these guidelines, principals are expected to take the lead to engage staff on dress standards which acknowledge diversity and are appropriate to the requirements of the varying activities associated with the curriculum and physical conditions; these guidelines are by no means exhaustive.

Consequences for teachers are contained in the appropriate regulations.
(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000.*
2. *T&TUTA Code of Ethics*
3. *Education Act Chap 39:01*
4. *Children's Authority Act Chap 46:10*

EXAMINATIONS

Assessment is a critical instructive component of teaching and learning. Schools conduct internal examinations as a form of summative assessment on a regular basis. Students' attendance and conduct during these examinations must be exemplary at all times. All actions that can disrupt the smooth and efficient execution of examinations are prohibited. Examinations should be conducted in a manner that conform with established standards and practices of external examinations. Schools must advise parents and students on exam timetables, exam protocols and the conduct of all examinations.

1. Schools should enact clear operational policies that govern the conduct of examinations.
2. All forms of cheating, including plagiarism, are prohibited. Consequences for breaches should be made clear and must be consistently enforced.
3. Students must attend all examinations and must be punctual in attendance.
4. Parents and guardians must submit written excuses for their students who miss internal examinations.
5. The opportunity to write internal examinations must be accorded to all students.
6. In the setting, administering, marking and reporting on tests, any act designed to alter students' actual performance is prohibited.
7. Gaining unauthorized access to actual questions on external examinations papers and divulging or attempting to divulge said information prior to the official start of that examainations is prohibited.
8. Cellular phones, or any other electronic device that can afford students to gain unfair advantage or access to external sites for information are not allowed in examination rooms.
9. Students found in possession of past CXC Multiple Choice question papers or "live" CXC question papers (examinations not yet administered) either wittingly (intentionally) or unwittingly (unintentionally) are in breach of the Caribbean Examination Council's Regulations and subject to the appropriate penalties.
10. A student guilty of any misconduct, or unfair or dishonest practice, may have his/her examination papers cancelled, be disqualified and be barred from entry to future examinations offered by external examination bodies, including the Caribbean Examinations Council. The normal period of debarment of a candidate from examinations is two years.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student Conference
- Parent/guardian contact
- Conference with parent/guardian
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Detention

The following refers to infractions at external examinations;

- Withholding of results (pending investigation)
- Loss of a grade (mark down of grade), depending on the gravity of the offence
- Cancellation of the results in the subject
- Disqualification
- Debarment (for up to two years)

References:

1. Education Act Chap 39:01

2. Regulations for the Examinations leading to Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate, Certificate of Secondary Level Competence and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Certificate Examinations of the Caribbean Examinations Council.

3. Guidelines for Candidates Writing Examinations Offered by CXC.

FIGHTING/ASSAULT/THREATS

School personnel are entitled to a school environment free from threat, aggression and assault.

1. Actions, comments or written messages, including messages sent via social media, which threaten others or are intended to incite others to fight are prohibited.
2. Intentionally hitting, shoving, scratching, biting, kicking, blocking the passage of, or throwing objects at school personnel, are prohibited.
3. Conveying by gestures, notes or verbal comments the intent to cause bodily injury, or to deprive any member of school personnel of his/her rights, or demonstrating hostile acts, are prohibited.
4. Fighting (involving two or more parties in conflict, when they are striking each other) with the intent of causing harm or injury, is prohibited. This action may extend to mutual shoving, wrestling, or other aggressive actions which may result in the harm or injury to either party, bystanders, or school property.
5. The wilful use of physical violence which is intended to result in bodily injury, or the use of a dangerous object in an effort to cause bodily injury, is prohibited.
6. Assault upon a member of staff or other school personnel is prohibited. Violation of this rule will result in **AN AUTOMATIC RECOMMENDATION FOR SUSPENSION AND POSSSIBLE EXPULSION**.
7. The wilful use of physical or verbal threats or physical abuse intended to cause bodily harm to students or school personnel is prohibited.
8. The wilful use of physical or verbal threats or physical abuse that result in an involuntary transfer of money or property to another student is prohibited.
9. Unsafe conduct which endangers either oneself or others is prohibited.
10. The use of threats to engage in terrorist acts or related utterances is prohibited.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student Conference
- Parent/ guardian contact
- Conference with parent/ guardian
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Detention
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Extended Suspension
- Referral to Learning Enhancement Centre

- Referral to law enforcement agencies
- In-school intervention programme
- School Community Service
- Expulsion

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.
(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Education Act, Chap 39:01*
2. *Children Act, Chap 46:01*
3. *Circular memorandum #4 – student discipline in and out of school (January 14, 1997)*
4. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000.*
5. *Public Service Commission Regulations, Chap 1:01.*
6. *Trinidad and Tobago Inter-Agency Protocols – Addressing Students in Conflict with the Law, July 2017.*
7. *The Family and Children Division Act, 2016.*
8. *Trinidad and Tobago Multi-Agency Protocol – Addressing Children in Conflict with the Law, 2017.*
9. *Summary Offences Act Chap 11:02*
10. *Judges Rules for Children, 2016.*

INTEGRITY

School personnel are expected to perform their duties with the highest level of integrity. They should also demonstrate respect for the belongings and rights of others.

The following acts are prohibited:

1. Cheating, which includes the actual giving, receiving or use of any unauthorised aid or assistance or the actual giving or receiving of unfair advantage on any form of academic work, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
2. Plagiarism, which includes using or copying the language, structure, idea and/or thought of another person and representing it as one's own original work.
3. Falsification, which includes, but is not limited to verbal, written or electronic transmission (i.e. e-mails, images), including the production or use of forgery, counterfeiting or misrepresentations of parents and guardians or any school personnel.
4. Stealing, which includes acquiring another person's possessions without right or permission. The possession of stolen property is considered theft.
5. Wilful or malicious false accusations/reports against school personnel or other students.
6. Any other action that compromises responsibility, civility, respect and academic excellence.
7. Practices designed to alter or misrepresent students' actual performance when setting, administering, marking and reporting on tests, are prohibited.
8. Attempts toward committing any act described above would constitute a violation and may be punishable to the same extent as if the attempted act had been completed.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent/guardian contact conference with school personnel
- Detention
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- In-school intervention programme
- Removal of privileges
- School community service
- Restitution
- Student behavioural contract
- Referral to law enforcement agencies

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.
(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000.*
2. *Public Service Commission Regulations, Chap 1:01*
3. *Cybercrime Bill 2017*
4. *Forgery Act Chap 11:13*
5. *Summary Offences Act Chap 11:02*

TRANSPORTATION

The Ministry of Education, through the Public Transport Service Corporation, provides transportation (bus/maxi taxis) for some primary and secondary school students using an approved list which is managed by the principal of the school. This service is conducted for transport to and from school and for instructional field and sporting trips. Other students use taxis or are transported by private hired buses/taxis. Some schools, including special schools, have their own buses and provide transportation mainly for sporting and instructional or field trips.

Students must conduct themselves appropriately on all forms of transportation involving school activities. They are prohibited from damaging/defacing the buses/taxis and from behaving in an obscene or disorderly manner while awaiting transportation or being transported. The use of obscene language on all forms of transportation is strictly prohibited. The driver of the bus/taxi/maxi taxi has the authority and responsibility for maintaining order and providing a safe environment. Potentially harmful situations must be reported by the driver to the principal of the relevant school.

Students are prohibited from violating the rights of others including homeowners, apartment dwellers, other pedestrians/students and businesses on their way to and from school.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent/guardian contact
- Conference with parent/guardian
- Detention
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Extended suspension
- Referral to Learning Enhancement Centre
- Restricted use or loss of transportation services
- Restitution
- In-school intervention programme
- School community service
- Mediation

References:

1. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000.*
2. *Public Service Commission Regulations, Chap 1:01.*
3. *Malicious Damage Act Chap 11:06*
4. *Summary Offences Act Chap 11:02*

VANDALISM

Members of the school community are entitled to enjoy a pleasant environment that is conducive to productivity..

Vandalism is the wilful defacing or destruction of school property, including any employee's or other person's property. This section includes, but is not limited to, the building, both exteriors and interiors thereof, books, computer equipment and software, school buses, private automobiles, school grounds and property as designated above. Causing, intent to cause or attempt to cause damage to school or personal property of others, is prohibited.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent/guadian contact
- Conference with parent/guadian
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Referral to law enforcement agencies
- Restitution
- School community service

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.
(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000.*
2. *Public Service Commission Regulations, Chap 1:01*
3. *Malicious Damage Act Chap 11:06*
4. *Summary Offences Act Chap 11:02*

ARSON

School personnel are entitled to work and learn in a safe environment with others who respect their well-being. Arson is considered an extremely serious infraction which threatens a safe and secure learning environment.

The use, intent to use, or threat to use an explosive or a representation of an explosive device, (including fireworks, smoke/stink/scratch bombs) as well as incendiary devices or any device that may contribute to a fire is prohibited. These actions include bringing the items on school property or to a school-sponsored event. Bomb-threats are also prohibited.

The use or intent to use any material (matches, lighters, aerosol sprays etc.) which may result in a fire on school property or setting fire to the property of students, staff, or volunteers, is prohibited.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Conference with parent/guardian
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Extended suspension
- Referral to Learning Enhancement Centre
- Referral to law enforcement agencies
- Confiscation
- School community service
- Restitution
- Expulsion

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.
(See Appendix V)

References:

1. Explosives Act, Chap 16:02
2. Firearms Act, Chap 16:01
3. Children Act, Chap 46:01
4. Circular memorandum # 4 (January 14, 1997) which addresses student discipline in and out of school.
5. Summary Offences Act Chap 11:02

DANGEROUS OBJECTS AND FIREARMS

All students have the right to learn in a safe environment with others who respect their well-being. The following are considered extremely serious violations which threaten a secure learning environment.

1. Students are forbidden to bring to school, possess, handle, transmit or use any knife or other dangerous weapons or objects. Dangerous objects include the representation of items commonly understood to be inappropriate to school activities. These items include: knives, box cutters, other sharp objects, mace, firecrackers, ammunition, fireworks, stink bombs, etc. Possession includes bringing the item(s) onto school property or to a school-sponsored event. Violation of this rule may result in a recommendation for suspension or expulsion.

2. Authorized objects for school activities include mathematical instruments and other such objects for technology studies. Misuse of any of these objects will be considered a violation and may result in a recommendation for suspension or expulsion.

3. The possession of look-alike weapons, including, but not limited to, cap guns, squirt or water guns, toy pistols, comb knives, etc., is prohibited on school property. Possession includes bringing the item(s) onto school property or to a school-sponsored event or school transport vehicle.

4. Possession, use or representation of a firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, operative or inoperative, on any school property or during any school activity, are prohibited. Possession includes bringing a firearm onto school property or to a school-sponsored event and storing it in a bag, locker or other receptacle. Firearms and ammunition include any device which meets the definition of firearm as defined in the Firearms Act of Trinidad and Tobago.

5. The possession or representation of any explosive or flammable material considered to have the capacity to create an explosion or to start a fire, including, but not limited to, firecrackers, lighter fluid and other flammable substances, is prohibited. Possession includes bringing the item(s) onto school property or to a school-sponsored event.

Violation of these rules may result in immediate suspension and the calling in of Law Enforcement agencies or eventually expulsion.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Conference with parent/guardian
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Extended suspension
- Referral to Learning Enhancement Centre
- Confiscation
- Referral to law enforcement agencies
- Expulsion

References:

1. Firearms Act, Chap 16:01

2. Circular memorandum # 29 (March 09, 1999) reissue of Circular memorandum #4 (January 14, 1997) which addresses student discipline in and out of school.

3. Education Act, Chap 39:01

4. The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000.

5. Public Service Commission Regulations, Chap 1:01

6. Children Act Chap 46:01

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

It is the policy of the Ministry of Education that the school environment shall be smoke-free, alcohol-free and drug-free. This policy position is consistent with the Ministry's overall objective of:

(i) Creating a safe teaching and learning environment in all schools.

(ii) Taking a holistic approach to the development of all children in the school system; that is, paying adequate attention to the total well-being of the child.

Under this policy, no one shall be permitted to have on their person or under their control, an illegal drug either for personal use, trafficking or any other reason. Alcohol **MUST NOT** be used on the school compound except in specific instances, with prior approval of the Ministry.

Specifically, smoking and vaping/ use of electronic cigarettes also known as E-cigs, vape pens, hookah, vaporizers or any other handheld electronic device used to create the feeling of tobacco smoking, is prohibited in all school buildings, inclusive of classrooms, laboratories, offices, work areas, study areas, reception areas, staff-rooms, meeting rooms, restrooms, stair-wells, eating areas, hallways, sports facilities and school grounds

Moreover, smoking (tobacco, marijuana and other substances) and vaping is prohibited in all buildings, offices and compunds of the Ministry of Education. Smoking can only be done beyond the gates of all offices and buildings of the Ministry of Education. The Smoke-Free Work Environment Policy shall also apply to vehicles belonging to the Ministry of Education.

Controlled or restricted drugs shall be permitted for a particular individual where prescribed for that individual by a licensed medical practitioner and dispensed by an authorised pharmacist.

It is the duty of all personnel on the school compound, to treat the possession or use of tobacco, electronic cigarettes, controlled and illicit drugs on school premises, as a serious violation of this policy. As a consequence, all personnel are expected to fully uphold this policy and in no way whatsoever, either by word, deed or omission, sanction, encourage or support the possession or use of any illegal, controlled or restricted drugs and tobacco products on school compounds.

Consistent with this policy, all schools shall develop programmes designed to create drug free, smoke free learning environments.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Confiscation of prohibited items/ devices
- Parent/guadian conference
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Referral to law enforcement agencies
- Expulsion

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

1. Referral to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
2. Other consequences

(see Appendix V)

References:

1. *Children Act, Chap 46:01*
2. *School Policy on Drug Abuse and Prevention - Towards a Smoke-Free Environment (June 12, 2005)*
3. *Circular memorandum #29 (March 09, 1999)*
4. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000.*
5. *Public Service Commission Regulations, Chap 1:01.*
6. *Dangerous Drugs Act Chap 11:25*

INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

The Ministry of Education fully subscribes to the provisions in the Children Act Chap 46:01 and Sexual Offences Act Chap 11:28 which calls for mandatory reporting to law enforcement regarding inappropriate sexual behaviour against children under the age of 18. In addition, principals are empowered to enquire into reports received and follow established procedures. Where the allegation is against the principal himself/herself, the school supervisor will conduct the appropriate investigations and follow established procedures in conjunction with Public Service/Teaching Service Regulations.

According to the Sexual Offences Act Chap 11:28, No. 27 of 1986, indictable sexual offences include:

- Rape
- Sexual intercourse with a female under 14 years of age
- Sexual intercourse with a female between 14 years and 16 years
- Sexual intercourse with a male under 16 years
- Incest
- Sexual intercourse with an adopted minor
- Sexual intercourse with a minor employee
- Buggery
- Indecent assault
- Serious indecency

With reference to Circular Memorandum No. 76, dated September 02, 2004, there are three main stages of the procedure for all school personnel regarding matters of Child Sexual Abuse. These are as follows:

1. **Reporting**
   - School personnel have the responsibility to report, **NOT** to investigate, determine fact, or make judgments of innocence or guilt.
   - When a report is made by a student/adult, school personnel are required to listen, get the facts and record the information as given by the person making the report (victim or any other person).
   - Information should be recorded consistent with the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act Chap 11:28, Amended by Act 31 of 2000, Section 31B.
   - Principal and person(s) informing the principal (teacher, parent, student and other adults), **MUST** then make a formal report in person at the police station/ Crime Protection Unit. Principal must inform parents **AFTER** making report to the station.
   - The Principal must then report to the Ministry via normal reporting channels. Copies of all

reports, including supporting documents, must be forwarded to the Legal Division of the Ministry of Education for appropriate advice and direction.

- The Principal must simultaneously make appropriate referral to the Student Support Services Division at the district level so that support for student and family could be provided.
- Principals must also ensure that the Children's Authority is informed of the offence via their hotline number 800-2014.

2. **Investigating**
   - The police are responsible for investigating and determining whether charges should be laid. The police enforce the law. They are also to inform parents.

3. **Determining**
   - The Court determines guilt or innocence.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent/ guardian contact
- Parent/ guardian conference
- Counselling
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Extended suspension
- Referral to Learning Enhancement Centre
- Referral to law enforcement agencies
- In-school intervention programme
- Student behavioural contract
- Referral to the Children's Authority

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.
(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Sexual Offences Act, Chap 11:28*
2. *Children Act, Chap 46:01*
3. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000.*
4. *Public Service Commission Regulations, Chap 1:01.*

5. *Circular memorandum No. 76 - Procedures for all school personnel regarding Matters of Child Sexual Abuse (Sept. 02, 2008)*
6. *International Child Abduction Act, No. 8 of 2008*
7. *Children's Authority Act, Chap 46:10*

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Ministry of Education to maintain a working and learning environment which provides freedom from sexual harassment and promotes fair and equitable treatment for all its employees and students. It is also the policy that there should be no inappropriate sexual misconduct or behaviour at schools, at school related activities or on the way to and from school.

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other inappropriate verbal, written, electronic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. A student/employee shall not sexually harass any student, employee, volunteer, visitor or any other person present in schools, at school functions or on the way to and from school.

It is also prohibited for any student or employee to engage in sexually explicit behaviour at school or school related activity. Examples of activities which could constitute sexual harassment/ inappropriate sexual behaviour include, but are not limited to:

1. Unwelcome sexual flirtations or propositions.
2. Unwelcome sexual slurs, epithets, threats, verbal abuse, derogatory comments or sexually degrading descriptions.
3. Graphic comments about an individual's body or overly personal conversation.
4. Offensive sexual drawings, pictures or gestures.
5. Spreading sexual rumours.
6. Inappropriate or suggestive sexual gestures.
7. Uninvited touching of an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way.
8. Displaying sexually explicit behaviour.
9. Using the electronic media to send any sexually explicit/offensive communication.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Parent conference
- Counselling
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Extended suspension

- Referral to Learning Enhancement Centre
- Referral to law enforcement agencies
- In-school intervention programme
- Student behavioural contract

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Sexual Offences Act, Chap 11:28*
2. *Children Act, Chap 46:01*
3. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000.*
4. *Public Service Commission Regulations, Chap 1:01.*
5. *Computer Misuse Act 2000.*
6. *Cybercrime Bill 2017*
7. *Summary Offences Act Chap 11:02*
8. *Guidelines on Sexual Harrassment in the Workplace by Equal Opportunity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago, March 2018.*

TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNET

The Ministry places high emphasis on the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the Internet for the delivery of quality education in the nation's schools. The use of technology is an integral part of teaching and learning in today's educational environment. More than ever before, technology is used in and out of the classroom to support communication, collaboration and project-based learning consistent with the attainment of 21st century learning, literacy and life skills.

Schools can make use of technology and the Internet to significantly enhance record-keeping, the storage of data and the maintenance of student records. Access to the Internet enables real-time communication with the Ministry of Education's offices, parents and guardians as well as with external stakeholders in the school community.

All school personnel, inclusive of students and auxiliary staff, are required to use computers and the Internet for the purposes as outlined above. Principals and teachers are required to bring to the attention of all school personnel, the Ministry's ICT in Education Policy. In addition, principals are required to implement operational ICT in Education policies at the level of the school. These policies must seamlessly conform to the Ministry's strategic ICT policies, the National School Code of Conduct and the School-Based Management Plan.

General Terms and Conditions of Use

1. Transmission of any material in violation of national laws and the Ministry of Education ICT Policy is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to the following: copyrighted material, threatening, violent, obscene, or pornographic material, material protected by trade secret, and computer viruses.

2. Use of technology for commercial activities is prohibited unless explicitly permitted. Commercial activity includes, but is not limited to the following:
   i. any illegal activity that requires an exchange of money and/or credit card numbers;
   ii. any unauthorized activity that requires entry into an area of service for which the school will be charged a fee;
   iii. any unauthorized purchase of sale of any kind; and
   iv. any use for product advertisement or political lobbying.

3. ICT devices, inclusive of school-assigned laptop computers, are the property of the Ministry of Education, assigned to schools. The unauthorized removal of these devices from the school compound constitutes an offence, and is prohibited.

ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The Ministry encourages the use of ICT and the Internet in support of teaching and learning in schools. The overarching principle however, must be responsible usage, with the main objective of utilising ICTs to enhance curriculum delivery in the nation's schools. The innumerable benefits of ICT usage are accompanied by significant risks. Computers are susceptible to hackers, viruses, and malware, while individual users are exposed to various threats such as identity theft, cyber-stalking and cyberbullying. Access to the Internet and the school's network are provided for students and teachers to access resources, conduct research and communicate with others in relation to teaching and learning activities. Students and staff are expected to conduct all online activities in a responsible manner.

The following rules are in effect for all users of the Ministry of Education's computers in schools unless otherwise directed by a teacher or school administrator:

1. The capture and display of pornographic images and videos as well as obscene/vulgar images, sounds, music, videos and materials is prohibited.
2. Illegal use or transfer of copyrighted materials to school-owned computers, including laptops, is prohibited.
3. Students are prohibited from playing games on the school computers during the instructional day unless otherwise directed by a teacher or administrator.
4. All users of Internet services must be authenticated prior to connection to the school's network in order to secure the network and its traffic.
5. Students are not allowed to connect a personally-owned device (BYOD) such as a laptop to the school's network unless permission is granted by a teacher or administrator.
6. Students shall not deface school assigned laptops in any way. This includes, but is not limited to marking, painting, drawing or placing stickers on any surface of the laptop.
7. Unauthorised additions, modifications or deletions of files on school laptops are prohibited.
11. School personnel should not knowingly transmit a virus to any computer.
12. The school's administration must set appropriate guidelines for all school personnel on the proper use of the school's network, Internet services, and other ICT resources.
13. All students must be informed of the safe use of the Internet and social media and the implications of inappropriate use.
14. Circumventing the school's network security protocols and unauthorized acquisition and use of the school's network/Wi-Fi password is prohibited.
15. Appropriate licenses and contractual arrangements must be secured before any third party application or electronic resource can be used in schools.

Alteration of Pre-set Software Image on School Computers

Altering/modifying the original Ministry of Education pre-set software image is prohibited. Examples include, but are not limited, to the following:

i. loading/installing any unauthorised software applications
ii. changing the desktop image
iii. changing the computer name
iv. changing or removing file extensions
v. altering security software
vi. altering the pre-loaded applications
vii. taking apart the computer for access to internal components

Violation of these regulations will result in serious disciplinary action and may also result in criminal charges if the violation of the regulation is also a violation of national law. Examples of such dual violations are:

(i) computer hacking or trespassing,
(ii) harassment, threats, or cyber bullying via computer and
(iii) computer fraud.

Ignorance of these regulations **will not** excuse an infraction.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent/guardian contact
- Detention
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Restitution
- School community service
- Revocation of computer access and use
- Removal of privileges
- Referral to law enforcement agencies – Cybercrime Unit

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Computer Misuse Act 2000*
2. *Ministry of Education Handbook on the Guidelines on the Use of Mobile Handheld Electronic Devices*
3. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000.*
4. *Cybercrime Bill, 2017*
5. *Children's Authority Act 46:10*

CELLULAR PHONE USAGE

Along with schools in the Caribbean region, schools in Trinidad and Tobago are increasingly incorporating digital computer devices, wireless electronic technology and mobile computing into their practice. Mobile Hand-held Electronic Communication Devices (MHECD), inclusive of mobile cellular phones, are a significant component in this digital evolution. Students as well as teachers utilize mobile phones for information, communication, entertainment and leisure. MHECDs are also useful tools for teaching, learning, research and the management of schools. They can be used in schools and at school-related activities once used in a managed, responsible, safe and legal manner.

MHECDs however, can sometimes prove to be distractors in the school environment and can be used for dishonest, illegal or abusive purposes. Schools must implement operational policies that militate against such misuse and abuse, and provide clear guidelines, controls and sanctions to govern the use of MHECDs.

1. MHECDs must be used responsibly at all times while on the school compound.

2. Students are prohibited from using MHECDs during class time unless authorized by a teacher.

3. MHECDs may be used on the school compound only under the supervision of a teacher/administrator in a productive teaching and learning environment.

4. MHECDs must be powered off (switched off) upon entering the school compound unless permission is granted by the principal or designated person in authority.

5. Schools' operational policies **may** require the collection of students' MHECDs for safe reception during the school day and subsequent distribution to students at the end of the school day.

6. MHECDs must **NOT** be used to make any audio or video recording, of any activity on the school compound, including class sessions, unless written consent is granted by the principal or designated school administrator.

7. MHECDs must **NOT** be used to make audio or video recording in showers, changing rooms and toilets on the school's compound.

8. Students are responsible for all personal MHECDs brought onto the school compound.

9. Students in school uniform are bound by the Mobile Phone policy of the school, even when they are out of the school compound.

10. Members of staff should exercise discretion and use their MHECDs only in instances of emergency while they are engaged in teaching and learning exercises with students.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying involves the use of electronic communication media to intimidate, torment, threaten, harass, humiliate, embarrass or otherwise target another individual using the Internet and digital technologies. It includes posting rumours, innuendos and slanderous messages, sending unsolicited messages via text messaging, instant messaging or e-mail, circulating embarrassing/inappropriate pictures or videos online and making threats. It also encompasses forwarding or transmitting information and pictures that were meant to be private.

Cyberbullying poses a serious threat to students, especially those most vulnerable. Students must be provided with protection from inappropriate, unacceptable and abusive behaviour using the Internet and social media. The Ministry maintains a zero tolerance level on cyberbullying in all its forms as it seeks to make all schools safe and secure learning environments for all school personnel.

The victims of cyberbullying, as well as the perpetrators, must be provided with counselling by officers of the Student Support Services Division. The Ministry condemns cyberbullying and advises that it constitutes an offence in contravention of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.

1. All school personnel must be cognizant of the various forms of cyberbullying and of what constitutes respectful and acceptable standards of communication in cyberspace.
2. Schools must adopt a 'zero tolerance' position on cyberbullying and take disciplinary action against anyone who engages in this activity.
3. The use of the school's digital devices, inclusive of laptops and desktops, for the purpose of cyberbullying is prohibited.
4. Any electronic device on the school compound that is suspected of being used for the purpose of cyberbullying will be subject to search.
5. Incidents of cyberbullying, cyberstalking and trolling must be immediately reported to the Principal.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Parent/guardian contact
- Conference with parent/ guardian
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Extended Suspension
- Referral to Learning Enhancement Centre
- Referral to law enforcement agencies
- Expulsion

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.
(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Education Act Chap 39:01*
2. *Convention on the The Rights of the Child, 1989*
3. *Children Act Chap 46:01*
4. *Summary Offences Act Chap 11:02*
5. *Cybercrime Bill 2017*

DATA SECURITY AND PRIVACY

Schools collect a significant amount of data inclusive of staff and students' names, addresses, phone numbers, academic and professional records. Data privacy refers to the ability of the school to secure this data and to determine what data can be shared with third parties. The rights of staff and students to the privacy of data stored on electronic devices must be upheld. Data must therefore be protected from unauthorized access and abuse.

1. All personal and confidential data must be secured in accordance with the Data Protection Act, 2011.
2. Schools, in collaboration with the Ministry's ICT Division, must implement security measures to militate against breaches of legal, statutory, regulatory, contract or privacy obligations.
3. Schools are mandated by law to share information with law enforcement authorities for child protection purposes and for the purposes of a criminal investigation, in accordance with the Children Act, Chap 46:01 and the Children's Authority Act, Chap 46:10.
4. A safe and secure repository of usernames, passwords and access codes must be maintained.
5. Principals, in collaboration with the ICT Division, must establish controls for protecting information systems against theft, abuse and other forms of harm and loss.
6. The practice of hacking and phishing to gain access to information is prohibited.

Violation of these guidelines will result in disciplinary action.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Parent/guardian contact
- Confiscation
- Removal of privileges
- Behavioural contract
- School community service
- In-school intervention programme
- Referrel to law enforcement agencies

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.
(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Policy on Use of Mobile Handheld Electronic Communications Devices in Schools (2007)*
2. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000*
3. *Public Service Commission Regulations, Chap 1:01*
4. *Children Act Chap 46:01*

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media are forms of electronic communication such as websites and apps that enable users to participate in social networking. It is facilitated through a plethora of online communications media dedicated to interaction, content sharing and collaboration. It includes, but is not limited to blogs, online discussion forums, instant messaging, podcasts, social networking sites (including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, Blogger and Tumblr) and social networking applications such as WhatsApp, Messenger, Snapchat and Viber. The use of social media can have a positive impact on the school community if it is used to facilitate effective communication and collaboration towards the attainment of educational goals.

A significant aspect of social media is the creation and persistence of the user's perennial digital footprint. Students must be apprised of the fact that all their online interactions, inclusive of statuses, messages, comments, blogs, pictures, websites visited and posts, leave an indelible trail. Schools must advise students of the possible long-term consequences of inappropriate and unethical posts online. In addition, the use of social media poses several associated risks to personal safety, including cyberbullying, child sexual grooming, cyberstalking and trolling. Students should not divulge personal information online, including their cellular phone numbers, addresses and personal whereabouts.

All interaction on social media, even if they are on private accounts, is subject to copyright, data protection, and other relevant legislation.

1. All interaction on social media must be courteous, respectful, age-appropriate, non-abusive and free of dishonourable content such as racial, ethnic, sexual, religious and physical disability slurs.
2. Negative posting on anyone, inclusive of all school personnel, is prohibited.
3. Students are prohibited from taking nude or partially nude pictures of themselves or of other students and circulating them on social media.
4. Persons found circulating pornographic material of minors or having pornographic material of minors on their cellular phones or other MHECDs are in contravention of the Children Authority Act Chap 46:10 Section 41 and can be liable on conviction to $30,000 and five (5) years imprisonment.
5. Parents must be notified when teachers require students to use social media as part of collaborative, project-based learning initiatives.
6. The Principal or designated administrator must approve all official school social media accounts.
7. Members of staff must set up separate and distinct social media sites or accounts for interaction with students for educational purposes. This should be separate from any personal social media accounts held by individual members of staff.

8. Members of staff must maintain the highest professional standards when communicating with students on social media. All communication must be age-appropriate and directly related to students' educational activities.
9. All members of staff who becomes aware of any inappropriate communication involving any child on social media must immediately report it to the principal.
10. The consent of parents or guardians must be obtained before pictures, videos, examination material, students' work and other student-related material can be published online/ on social media.
11. Teachers who choose to use social media as a teaching and learning tool must provide advice to students and must insist on acceptable standards and appropriate use prior to and during online interaction.
12. Parents and guardians should, upon request, be provided with information regarding the social media platform to be used for educational purposes. This should include:
    - which social media platform will be used
    - the purpose for the social media interaction
    - who will monitor the interactions
    - the rules of engagement relating to the use of the social media

Violation of these guidelines will result in disciplinary action.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Parent/guardian contact
- Removal of privileges
- Behavioural contract
- In-school intervention programme
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Referral to law enforcement agencies

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.
(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Policy on Use of Mobile Handheld Electronic Communications Devices in Schools (2007)*
2. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000*
3. *Public Service Commission Regulations, Chap 1:01*
4. *Children Act Chap 46:01*

RANGE OF CONSEQUENCES

STUDENTS

The following chart shows the consequential actions that may occur for each infraction. A range is given for a first offence, and a separate range for a repeated offence or a serious violation. In determining the appropriate consequence for a violation within the given range, the age of the student and the past pattern of behaviour will be considered. Consequences will be timed and will be appropriate for the student's stage of development.

The document applies to all primary and secondary schools. Each school is authorised to determine specific consequences of guidelines unique to that school that are not in conflict with this code.

Students are subject to discipline for conduct at school, while travelling to and from school, at school sponsored events, while at other schools in the country and while off campus, whenever such conduct has a direct effect on the discipline or general welfare of the school.

If a student has demonstrated excellent behaviour and then becomes involved in an infraction, school officials will consider the student's positive behaviour record prior to taking any action. If a student has continually repeated or been involved in inappropriate conduct, then consequential action will probably be the maximum action listed. For students with diagnosed disabilities, behavioural consequences will be made appropriate, taking the disability into consideration.

Consequences specifically forbidden are:

- Corporal punishment
- Use of evaluation procedures as a disciplinary procedure, e.g. arbitrarily assigning a test to an individual or class that is behaving inappropriately.

Consequences range from:

- Student conference
- Parent/guardian contact
- Conference with parent/guardian
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Detention
- In-school intervention programme
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Extended suspension
- Referral to Learning Enhancement Centre
- Confiscation
- Restitution
- Referral to law enforcement agencies
- Community service
- Mediation

TEACHERS AND PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF

The procedure to be followed in cases where disciplinary proceedings are brought against any teacher must be in keeping with the Public Service Commission Regulations, Chapter1:01, as amended by the Public Service Commission (Amendment) Regulations 1990 (Appendix V refers).

In accordance with Regulation 85 of the Regulations at 1 above, permanent secretaries and heads of departments are given jurisdiction to hear and determine acts of misconduct by civil servants.

Permanent secretaries and heads of departments are required to report to the Director of Personnel Administration any allegations of misconduct or indiscipline made against members of the teaching service, and in the case of civil servants, any violations of the disciplinary rules other than those which the permanent secretaries and heads of departments have jurisdiction to hear and determine.

Heads of division/unit and principals are required to submit comprehensive reports on the allegations of misconduct or indiscipline committed by members of their staff to the Permanent Secretary for further action.

In an effort to prevent any incident from progressing to a level requiring more serious disciplinary action, however, respective officers and/or administrators may address acts of misconduct relative to poor job performance and work conduct through a process of progressive disciplining. The procedural steps in progressive disciplining, which may include counseling, verbal warning, written warning and disciplinary action in accordance with the Public Service Commission regulations, are detailed in Circular memorandum Number 37 dated March 31st 2004.

References

1. Revised Green Paper on: Standards and Guidelines for the Operation of All Schools (January, 2007)

LEARNING ENHANCEMENT CENTRE

Learning Enhancement Centres (LEC) are facilities where students on extended suspension are assigned to ensure that they do not engage in further disruptive behaviours or are not exposed to dangerous influences when they are not at school. At the LEC, students are exposed to a series of assessments and interventions conducted by Officers of the Student Support Services Division.

Students are also exposed to a specialized LEC programme, which includes close collaboration with parents, home visits, individual or group counselling and skill-building sessions to enhance the students psychosocial functioning. Students are also afforded an exit interview and a case conference with the School Supervisor III at the District Level to prepare them for reintegration to the school system.

The LEC advocates for school personnel to be cognizant of the various consequences for misconduct, as outlined in the National School Code of Conduct, and of restorative justice approaches that can be implemented after acts of transgression.

OFFENCE	OCCURRENCE	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
ALCOHOL & DRUGS	First	Suspension	Law enforcement
	Repeated	Suspension	Law enforcement
Using, possessing, selling, distributing, soliciting or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, other intoxicants or any look-a-like substances. Possessing any drug paraphernalia.			
ARSON	First	Suspension	Law enforcement
	Repeated	Suspension	Law enforcement
Using fire to destroy or attempt to destroy property. The Fire Department and law enforcement will be notified of any incident.			
ASSAULT	First	Suspension	Law enforcement
	Repeated	Suspension	Law enforcement
Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing physical injury to another.			
BOMB THREATS FALSE ALARMS	First	Suspension	Law enforcement
	Repeated	Suspension	Law enforcement
Law enforcement will be notified of any incident.			
BULLYING	First	Parent Conference	Suspension
	Repeated	Suspension	Law enforcement
Intimidating or abusing other by the use of force, coercion, or threat.			
DEFIANCE OF AUTHORITY	First	Parent conference	Suspension
	Repeated	Parent involvement	Suspension
Refusal to follow reasonable requests of any school adult and/or designated authority.			
DISORDERLY or DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT	First	Student conference	Suspension
	Repeated	Parent involvement	Expulsion
Language or behaviour which disrupts and/or interferes with the educational environment or process.			

OFFENCE	OCCURRENCE	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
NON COMPLIANCE WITH DRESS CODE	First	Student conference	Detention
	Repeated	Detention	Suspension

The principal, staff and parents are responsible for determining the school uniform. Dress and grooming are primary responsibilities of students and parent/guardians.

EXPLOSIVE DEVICES	First	Suspension	Law enforcement
	Repeated	Suspension	Expulsion

The use, or threat of use, possession (carrying or concealing) or sale of explosive material or look-a-like devices. Violation shall result in referral to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

EXTORTION	First	Parental conference	Suspension
	Repeated	Suspension	law Enforcement

Demanding money, or something of value (e.g. lunches) from another person in return for protection from violence or threat of violence.

FIGHTING	First	Parental conference	Suspension
	Repeated	Suspension	Expulsion

A hostile physical encounter between two or more individuals.

FIRE STARTING EQUIPMENT	First	Parental conference	Suspension
	Repeated	Suspension	Expulsion

Bringing onto school property or possessing any of the following is prohibited: matches, lighters, fuses, or any other device capable of starting fires. Violation may result in referral to an appropriate law enforcement agency. (Approved materials for science or any such subjects are not included.)

FORGERY	First	Parental conference	Suspension
	Repeated	Suspension	Law Enforcement

Writing or giving false or misleading information to school officials by forging parent's, guardian's or any other person's signature on any letter or other school document, cheating, plagiarising, turning in another person's papers, projects, computer programmes, etc., as the student's own, and/or any other misrepresentation of the truth.

OFFENCE	OCCURRENCE	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
GAMBLING	First	Parental conference	Suspension
	Repeated	Suspension	Suspension
Participating in games of chance for the purpose of exchanging money and other things of value			
LEWDNESS	First	Informal talk	Suspension
	Repeated	Suspension	Suspension
Indecent exposure and/or the use of obscenity, profanity, whether oral, written or gestured.			
INTIMIDATION MENACING	First	Informal talk	Suspension
	Repeated	Suspension	Suspension
An intentional, serious threat by word or act (including physical and/or verbal bullying/threatening), which places another person in fear of imminent serious physical injury. This includes, but is not limited to, words or conduct directed toward another person because of their race, gender, colour, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.			
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	First	Parent involvement	Suspension
	Repeated	Suspension	Suspension
Sexual harassment is prohibited conduct. It may be verbal, visual, written, or physical in nature and includes unwelcome sexual advances.			
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT	First	Parental Involvement	Suspension
	Repeated	Suspension	Law Enforcement
			Expulsion
Sexual misconduct refers to, but not limited to, all the offences listed in the Sexual Offences Amendment Act.			
TOBACCO or VAPING	First	Parental conference	Suspension
	Repeated	Parental conference	Suspension
The use or possession of tobacco in any form.			
TARDINESS	First	Informal Talk	Parental conference
	Repeated	Parental conference	Detention
Arriving late to school and/or class.			

OFFENCE	OCCURRENCE	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
TECHNOLOGY MISUSE	First Repeated	Informal Talk Parental Involvement	Suspension Suspension

Failure to comply with the school ICT Policy.

THEFT	First Repeated	Parent Involvement Suspension	Suspension Law Enforcement

Taking, giving, or receiving property not belonging to you. Knowingly possessing any stolen property or property reported lost or missing.

WEAPONS	ANY	Suspension & Law Enforcement	Law Enforcement Expulsion

Violation shall result in referral to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

TRESPASSING	First Repeated	Informal talk Parental involvement	Suspension Suspension

Being present in unauthorised places or refusing to leave when asked to do so by the principal or designated authority,entering or remaining unlawfully in school buildings or on any part of school property or adjacent areas.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE	First Repeated	Informal talk Parental involvement	Parent involvement Community Police

Any absence which has not been excused by a parent or legal guardian and/or appropriate school official.

THREAT OF VIOLENCE	First Repeated	Parent involvement Suspension	Suspension Law Enforcement

Communicating intent to commit serious bodily harm to others. Parents of threatened student are to be be notified in writing. Violation may result in referral to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

VANDALISM	First Repeated	Parental conference Suspension	Suspension Law Enforcement

Intentionally damaging, defacing, (including tagging/graffiti), or destroying property. The student and the parent or guardians may be liable for the amount of the assessed damages not to exceed $5,000 plus costs, if legal action is required

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILD

Rights of the Child

Every person under the age of 18 born in Trinidad and Tobago, or born to, or adopted by parents who are citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, is regarded as a child and is subject to care and protection under the law regarding, but not limited to:

1. the right to live, survive and grow;
2. the right to be registered at birth or upon adoption, and to be a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago;
3. the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of age, race, origin, colour, religion or sex;
4. the right not to be discriminated against or punished because of the belief or actions of one's family member;
5. the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by one's parents;
6. the right not to be separated from one's parents against one's will, other than by a court of law;
7. the right to privacy in one's own family home and in respect of one's correspondence;
8. the right to hold ideas of one's own, including religious beliefs and to express those views freely in matters affecting oneself;
9. the right to associate with other people for peaceful purposes;
10. the right not to be treated with violence by a family member, a teacher, a public officer or by any other person;
11. the right to free education up to the age of 16;
12. the right not to have to work at anything that is dangerous or that will interfere with education;
13. where the child has broken the law and is in custody, the right not to be subjected to inhumane or degrading punishment. A child under the age of eleven giving evidence in a court matter shall not be subject to the laws governing punishment. A child under the age of 11 giving evidence in a court matter shall not be subject to the laws governing perjury and shall have the option of giving evidence by electronic means;
14. the right not to be subject to capital punishment, nor to life imprisonment.
15. the right of a child offender not to be placed in custody with adult prisoners.

Responsibilities of the Child

All persons under the age of 18 in Trinidad and Tobago, having the special protection under the law granted to a child, have responsibilities under the law which shall be observed subject to their age and understanding, including, but not limited to the following:

1. to respect and to obey the law;
2. not to take or to harm the property of another person without the person's permission;
3. to learn about human rights and to respect the rights of others;
4. to respect the guidance of parents, except where the law says otherwise;
5. to attend school until the age of 16;
6. to learn about and to respect their culture, language and country;
7. to express their views about matters which affect themselves;
8. to respect the environment;
9. to respect their own religious beliefs and the religious beliefs of others.

Internet link to the Rights of the Child:

https://www.crin.org/en/library/publications/trinidad-and-tobago-childrens-rights-references-universal-periodic-review

Appendix II

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTING SUSPENSION

A. LEGAL FRAMEWORK - Education Act, Chap 39:01
Section 27 (a) and (d)
Section 43 - 46

B. CIRCULARS -

No. 4 - 14th January 1997
No. 86 - 20th April 1997
No. 29 - 9th March 1999
No. 54 - 27th May 1999
No. 76 – 2nd September 2008

C. GUIDING PRINCIPLE/PHILOSOPHY

- Best interest of the child is a primary concern.
- Safety and security of other students, members of staff and all other persons present on the compound.
- Preventive/protective. Not punitive

.

D. RESPONSIBILITY OF PRINCIPAL

- Investigate all reported incidents.
- Obtain written statements.
- Must have good reason to believe allegations are true and an offence was committed.
- Complete prescribed form in triplicate – "Notice of Suspension From Attendance At School".
- Notify parent/ guardian immediately. The Notice of Suspension must be issued to the parent/ guardian ONLY. It must be signed and dated before issuance. Failure of parent/ guardian to accept the Notice of Suspension must be witnessed and an appropriate Log Entry made.
- Notify Minister immediately through district office – copy of completed prescribed form accompanied by a preliminary report.
- A full report including a written narrative of the incident (summary statement), findings of investigation, statements from the aggrieved, the alleged perpetrator and witnesses, must reach the district office within three days of the incident.
- Student to be removed from school compound at the end of the school day, or during school hours with parent's consent/knowledge.

- In case of extended suspension – further investigation after the initial report.
- Requests for extended suspension must be made on the same form (insert extended suspension requested).
- Notify parent/student of Minister's decision to extend suspension.

The Case Conference:

After an act of serious misconduct by a student:

(a) Extended suspension is requested by the principal and/or advocated by the School Supervisor III, and is formally granted by the Minister of Education following which the student along with his parents/guardians are duly informed.

(b) At the district level, a case conference format consisting of a small team, the School Supervisor III, Guidance Officer II, and School Representative, should be used as the mechanism for conducting further investigation into the matter.

The suspended student along with his/her parents/guardians should meet with this team.

(c) The following data should be made available to the team prior to the commencement of the case conference:

(i) Student Cumulative Record Card.

(ii) Progress Report.

(iii) Principal's/School's Report on the incident.

(iv) Student's written version of the incident (where possible).

(v) Any diagnostic measures administered by guidance officer/teacher.

(d) The overall objectives of the case conferences should be:

(i) To allow the student/parent/guardian an opportunity to review and discuss the allegation of the incident.

(ii) To allow the student an opportunity to experience justice and fair play through the process of the case-conference.

(iii) To provide the panel with a holistic appraisal of the student so as to act in the student's best interests.

(iv) To make recommendations to the Minister on the continuation of the educational development of the student.

(e) The roles of the various personnel should be as follows:

School Supervisor III –

- Chairperson/investigator of the proceedings.
- Makes final recommendations to the Minister.
  Presents general information on the student and clarifies matters surrounding the student's involvement in the alleged incident.

Guidance Officer II –

- Advocates for the student.
- Clinically reviews the student's behaviour and performance.
- Performs a consultative role and makes recommendations to the Chairperson/School Supervisor III.

(f) At the end of the case conference, appropriate recommendations are made to the Minister.

Appendix III

IDENTIFYING WARNING SIGNS OF POTENTIAL VIOLENCE

Warning signs mean that a child appears to be troubled, and violence might be one of the possible outcomes of this distress. Do not stigmatise children nor assume that they are violent just because they are at risk for such behaviour, other warning signs may also exist. Consequently, this list should not be considered all inclusive, and certain items and combinations may be far more indicative of a potential problem than others. The signs include:

- Violent behaviour in the past.
- Tantrums and uncontrollable angry outbursts abnormal for someone that age.
- Anti-social behaviours that began at an early age.
- Maintains friendships with others who have repeatedly engaged in problem behaviours.
- Name-calling, cursing, or abusive language.
- Has brought a weapon or has threatened to bring a weapon to school.
- Violent threats when angry.
- Substance abuse problem.
- Frequent truancy or suspension.
- Preoccupation with weapons or violence, especially associated with killing humans than with target practice or hunting.
- Few or no close friends despite having lived in the area for sometime.
- Sudden decrease in academic performance and/or interest in school activities.
- Abuse to animals.
- Little parental supervision given the pupil's age and level of maturity.
- Victim of abuse or neglect by parents/guardians.
- Repeatedly witnessing domestic abuse or other forms of violence.
- Trauma or loss in their home community.
- No attention to the feelings or rights of others.
- Intimidation of others.
- Victim of intimidation by others.
- Perceived slights, rejection, or mistreatment by others; blames others for his/her

problems and appears vengeful.

- Pre-occupation with TV shows, movies, video games, reading materials, or music that express violence.
- Excessive anger in writing objects.
- Involvement in a gang or anti-social group.
- Depression, withdrawn, or severe mood or behavioural swings, which appear to be of greater magnitude, duration, or frequency than those typically experienced by pupils that age.
- Sadistic, violent, prejudicial, or intolerant attitudes.
- Threatened or actually attempted suicide or acts of unfashionable self-mutilation.

References:

http://www.ineesite.org/toolkit/docs/doc_1_HelpingChildrenwithAggressiveBehaviour.pdf.

Appendix IV

HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY

General Principles

The Ministry of Education has as one of its major goals the provision of a safe, secure learning environment for all the children of the nation. The Education Act, Section 27(a), gives principals the responsibility for supervision of the personal safety of pupils as well as of the school plant.

Health and Safety of Students

1. Proper precautions shall be taken to prevent injuries. All safety equipment and safety features of the facility shall be set in place and properly maintained.
2. The school administration shall ensure that qualified personnel conduct a safety/emergency/ disaster drill on a termly basis.
3. The school administration shall ensure that qualified personnel (Fire Services) conduct a review of the safety/emergency/disaster procedures at least annually. Safety inspections of site, buildings, and equipment must be conducted annually.
4. All schools must have an official evacuation site clearly designated and known to all students and staff for use in case of an emergency (fire or bomb threat etc.). Evacuation to this site must be part of the drill.
5. The school administration shall make arrangements for the school to be sprayed regularly for pests and vermin as necessary. Steps must be taken to ensure that students are not exposed to dangerous chemicals used.
6. The Ministry is working toward compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act.
7. The administration shall ensure that the school environs are kept in a clean and sanitary condition, and conducive to the promotion of good health.
8. The school administration shall provide proper, secure receptacles for the collection of garbage.
9. Water tanks at all schools shall be drained and cleaned on a termly basis and the water quality tested after the tanks are refilled.
10. A safety audit shall be conducted at all schools every two years for schools that are 10 years old or under, and annual safety audits for schools over 10 years old.

Communicable Diseases

1. Notwithstanding any rule of law to the contrary, no person may be admitted into any early childhood centre or primary school unless he produces to the principal, thereof, a certificate of immunisation with respect to every communicable disease, save that where a person produces a certificate of a medical practitioner certifying that immunisation against any particular communicable disease or communicable diseases is not advisable on medical grounds, no certificate of immunisation is required to be produced with respect to that communicable disease or those communicable diseases, as the case may be.

2. A principal of any nursery school or primary school who admits any person to such school in contravention of subsection (1) or section 5 is liable on summary conviction to a fine of $1000.

Public Health (Nursery Schools and Primary Schools Immunization) Act, Chap 28:03
(Certificate of immunisation required for admission to nursery schools and primary schools)

Security

1. Premises must be kept secure.
2. Schools shall be assigned an adequate number of security officers in accordance with the policy of the Ministry of Education. A system must therefore be put in place for ensuring that the allocated number of officers is kept on duty.
3. Security lights shall be strategically placed so as to augment the security on the school compound.
4. The security officers are responsible for the following; inter alia:
    - maintaining a courteous relationship with students and staff while performing their duties scrupulously;
    - investigating security incidents;
    - controlling keys and access to all areas on the compound;
    - preventing the illegal removal of equipment and materials from the compound;
    - preventing unauthorised visitors from entering the compound;
    - recording incidents and reports in the relevant security logs;
    - informing the principals or agents of the Ministry of Education of all incidents and/or reports of loss, theft or damage to property;
    - patrolling the compound at half-hour intervals.
5. Vehicles entering and leaving the compound may be subject to search.
6. Persons entering the school compound are subject to security checks.
7. Any student leaving the compound during normal school hours must have a written excuse from a parent/guardian and the written permission of the Principal or Vice-Principal.
8. Any person collecting a child from school during normal school hours must have the written approval of the Principal or Vice -Principal.

Reference:

Revised Green Paper on: Standards and Guidelines for the Operation of All Schools, January, 2007

Appendix V

THE EDUCATION (TEACHING SERVICE) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2000

TEACHERS CODE OF CONDUCT

General Conduct

Under Section 62 of the 'Regulations', a teacher's conduct shall at times be such as would not bring the Service into disrepute.

Duties of teacher

Under Section 63 (2) of the 'Regulations', in the discharge of his/her duties, a teacher shall be courteous and polite to colleagues, students and members of the public.

Gifts, Rewards

Section 72 stipulates that except with the permission of the permanent secretary, a teacher shall not accept any gift or reward from any member of the public or from any organisation for services rendered in the course of performing official duties.

Section 73 makes the Exception that a teacher may accept a present offered:

(a) by a representative of a foreign government on the occasion of an official visit to that country;

(b) by a community organisation on a social occasion where the gift represents the work or achievement of that organisation; or

(c) on his marriage, retirement, transfer, or other social or celebratory occasion.

Accepting Bribes

Under Section 74 of the Regulations:

(1) A teacher shall not, directly or indirectly, solicit or accept any property, benefit or favour of any kind for himself or any other person in consideration for the performance of his duties or on the understanding that the performance of his duties is influenced in any manner.

(2) A teacher who is offered a bribe shall immediately inform the principal in writing, and the principal so informed, shall notify the permanent secretary who will make the report to the police.

Definition of Misconduct

According to Section 77 of the Regulations, a teacher commits an act of misconduct when:

(1) Without reasonable excuse does an act which-

(a) amounts to failure to perform any required lawful duty in a proper manner;

(b) contravenes any of the Regulations;

(c) contravenes any law relating to the performance of the duties of this office;

(d) is otherwise prejudicial to the efficient conduct of the Service or tends to bring the Service into disrepute.

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(2) Without prejudice to the generality of sub regulations (1), a teacher commits an act of misconduct if he/she:

(a) is absent from office or official duties without leave or valid excuse, or is habitually irregular in the time of arrival or departure from the place of employment;

(b) wilfully disobeys or disregards any lawful order made or given by any person having authority to make or give such order;

(c) is unfit for duty through drunkenness or the illicit use of drugs;

(d) is inefficient or incompetent through causes which are within his control;

(e) commits any immoral, obscene or disorderly conduct in office;

(f) performs the required duties in a negligent manner;

(g) exercises authority unreasonably, or abuses that authority in the course of performing required duties;

(h) uses, without the authority of the principal or in his/her absence the vice-principal, any property or facilities provided for the purposes of the service, for a purpose not connected with his official duties;

(i) has a criminal charge proved against him/her; or

(j) participates in the meeting of any political organisation while on duty or while on official business.

References:

Revised Green Paper on: Standards and Guidelines for the Operation of All Schools (January, 2007)

APPENDIX V1

MANDATORY REPORTING

With the proclamation of the Children Act 2012, Section 31(1) of the Sexual Offences Act Chap 11:28 reads as follows:

31. (1) Any person who—

a) is the parent or guardian of a minor;
b) has the actual custody, charge or control of a minor;
c) has the temporary custody, care, charge or control of a minor for a special purpose, as his attendant, employer or teacher, or in any other capacity; or
d) is a medical practitioner, or a registered nurse or midwife, and has performed a medical examination in respect of a minor,

and who has reasonable grounds for believing that a sexual offence has been committed in respect of that minor, under this Act or section 9, 10, 18 or 19 of the Children Act, shall report the grounds for his belief to a police officer as soon as reasonably practicable.

NB: Sections 9 & 10 of the Children Act 2012 deal with Female Genital Mutilation and Sections 18 & 19 deal with sexual penetration of a child and sexual touching of a child respectively.

Penalties for failing to report:

Section 31(2) provides:

Any person who without reasonable excuse fails to comply with the requirements of subsection (1), is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of fifteen thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term of seven years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Freedom from liability once report made in good faith:

Section 31(3)

No report made to a police officer under the provisions of subsection (1) shall, if such report was made in good faith for the purpose of complying with those provisions, subject the person who made the report to any action, liability, claim or demand whatsoever.

APPENDIX VII

POSITION OF TRUST

PART VI OF THE CHILDREN ACT 2012 (OTHER SEXUAL OFFENCES)

PERSONS IN A POSITION OF TRUST:

Ministry Officials, School Supervisors, School Administrators, Teachers, SSSD Staff, School Prefects, PTA President, members of the Local School Boards, Captain and Coaches of School Teams are all deemed to be in a position of trust as laid down by Section 29 and 30 of the Children Act 2012 and are subject to stiffer penalties in law for any acts of sexual grooming or child abuse on a minor on summary conviction to a fine of $50,000 and to imprisonment for fifteen (15) years.

Section 30 of the Children Act 2012 provides:

For the purpose of this Part a person is in a position of trust **in relation to a child if he-**

(i) is a constable, medical practitioner, nurse, social worker, teacher, scout master, troop leader, clergyman, spiritual leader, driver, sports coach or trainer or other person in authority in whose care the child is placed;

Section 29 of the Children Act 2012 provides that persons who are in a position of trust in relation to a child at the time and commit one of the offences listed under Part VI are liable:

where the offence does not involve penetration–

- on summary conviction, to a fine of fifty thousand dollars and to imprisonment for fifteen years; or
- on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for twenty-five years; or

where the offence involves penetration,

- on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment

NB: This Part deals with the following offences:

- Sexual penetration of a child;
- Sexual touching of a child who is under the age of 16 years;
- Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual penetration of a child or sexual touching of a child;
- Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity with an animal;
- Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child for the purposes of obtaining sexual gratification;
- Causing a child to watch a sexual act for the purpose of sexual gratification; and
- Meeting a child following sexual grooming.

GLOSSARY

Assault:	A physical attack on another person.
BYOD:	BYOD refers to Bring Your Own Device, a policy that allows students to bring their personal devices, such laptops and digital cameras, to school for educational purposes.
Electronic Cigarette:	Also known as an e-cig, vaporizer, hookah. Any handheld electronic device used to simulate the experience of cigarette/ tobacco smoking.
ICT	ICT refers to Information and Communication Technology. The diverse set of digital tools and resources used to communicate, create, disseminate, store and manage information. It includes devices such as computers, mobile devices, the Internet, television, telephones and multimedia equipment.
Internet	The Internet and the World Wide Web refers to the collection of networks linked together using a common protocol - a global computer network achieved through the interconnection of smaller computer networks around the world.
Phishing:	Phishing is the attempt to obtain sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, and credit card details, often for malicious reasons, by disguising as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication
Prosocial	Relating to or denoting behaviour that is positive, helpful, and intended to promote social acceptance and friendship.
School personnel:	Students as well as all adults whose roles place them in contact with students in school settings and at school-related activities.
Smoke-Free:	Absence of smoke from the school compound includes not just smoke from traditional cigarettes but also the vapor produced from Electronic Cigarettes.
Troll:	Internet slang. A troll is a person who sows discord on the Internet by starting arguments or upsetting people by posting inflammatory, extraneous, or off-topic messages in an online community with the deliberate intent of provoking readers into an emotional response or of otherwise disrupting normal on-topic discussion.

Vaporizer, vape:	A device used to vaporize the active ingredients of plant material, commonly cannabis, tobacco, or other herbs or blends, for the purpose of inhalation. They can also be filled with a mixture of propylene glycol, glycerine, and nicotine.
Vaping:	The act of inhaling vapor produced from an electronic cigarette. The vapor is produced from an e-liquid, concentrate, or dry herb.

Ministry of Education
Education Tower A
#5 St. Vincent Street
Port of Spain
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

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